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National Park Service

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\_\_\_\_William Smith House\_\_\_\_\_  
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7. Description

The William Smith House is a fine Federal-style brick farmhouse, ca 1813-1820, with a side wing built at the same time. It was the center of a prosperous farm owned by Quaker William Smith. The property includes a notable large brick barn with diamond-patterned ventilation holes, ca. 1813, as well as an unusually fine, brick, two-story springhouse, also ca. 1813. Later contributing structures in the farm complex include a wide loafing shed and a large corncrib, as well as a ca. 1948 two-car garage. The house is a three-bay, side-hall, gable-roof structure with the front wall laid in Flemish bond. There is a recessed right-side dining and kitchen wing, also in brick, originally one-and-a-half stories, now two stories. The interior woodwork is unusually fine for this isolated Loudoun County farm area in the early nineteenth century. The house is in excellent condition, and the grounds are well maintained and attractively planted. The barn was repaired after storm damage ca. 1950. The springhouse and other outbuildings are in good condition.

Landscaping and Grounds

The house is set on a fairly steep slope that rises to the rear. It faces southeast, toward Rt. 711. The front yard is on fill to create a level space defined by a rubble stone wall, with three sets of stone steps to grade. Originally there was a wooden fence on top of the stone retaining wall, but this was removed ca. 1980. The rear of the house has a level flagstone terrace, with a rubble-stone retaining wall of modern construction. The garden extends up the slope.

An asphalt and gravel lane leading straight in from the road is a remnant of an old farm lane that was in part a cut-down grade to facilitate early use by horse-drawn wagons. It also served a modern (ca. 1948) dairy barn until 1983. (The dairy barn survives and is located on the property just north of the Boidock tract. It is not part of the nominated property.) Edged by mature cedars and deciduous trees, the lane now runs in a straight line from the road to the freestanding garage west of the house. The yard in front of the house was formerly enclosed by a wood fence set on stone retaining walls, as shown in a ca. 1895 photograph of the house. The wood fence has been removed, and only the retaining walls remain. The yard contains mature evergreen and deciduous trees, shrubs, and flower beds. The unusual two-story brick springhouse is down the slope to the southeast of the house, near a large man-made pond at the low point of the property.

House

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Exterior

The Federal-style, three-bay, two-story brick house, constructed ca. 1813-1820, has a side-hall, double-pile plan in the main block and an original recessed, two-room side wing, also of brick. The gable roof is of standing-seam tin; the foundation is rubble stone. The main block is 27'-1" wide x 28'-0" deep; the wing is 25'11" wide by 20'-3" deep. The three-bay wing, which contains the dining room and kitchen, was originally one-and-a-half stories but was raised to two full stories sometime in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Also in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, part of the second floor of the wing was extended out over a first-floor porch, bringing the upper wall in line with the front of the main block. Mrs. Helen Houser White, who lived in the house as a child, recalls that these changes were made before her family moved there in 1919<sup>1</sup>; however, the wing had not been raised by the time the ca. 1895 photograph noted above was taken. The second-floor is sheathed in German siding, and has decorative diamond-shaped shingles on the front-facing gable. On the main block of the house is a two-bay front porch with two sets of square double columns and a flagstone floor. An 11-bay screened porch with a wood floor and stone steps is in front of the wing. On the front façade of the main block the brick is laid in Flemish bond, while the other sides and wing are laid in six-course American bond. The main entrance is located in the third (east) bay of the main block, immediately adjacent to the wing. A working transom is above the six-panel front door. East of the three-bay side wing is a one-bay, one-story addition, 10'-4" x 14'-2", now containing the laundry room and a small bath. It also is of brick construction but of five-course American bond. It may be of nearly the same date as the main block, as the brick appears very similar throughout, except that there is a definite joint between the wing and the addition and the coursing does not match.

A screened 11-bay porch with original square paneled columns extends across the first floor of the kitchen-dining room wing. On the west wall of the porch, shelves have been inserted into the opening where a side door once opened from the entry hall. Beside it, a hatch to the basement has been inserted in the northwest corner of the porch. There are a door and window opening to the dining room as well as a door and window to the kitchen. Another door leads to the laundry room. The original outside basement entrance is on the front left bay of the main block; it is presently covered with plywood.

The west wall is without windows except for a small attic casement and measures about 30'-6" high. The rear wall mirrors the front, with two windows and a

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. White was interviewed by Brenda M. Boidock by telephone, September 17, 2002.

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door in the main block and a door and two windows in the wing. On the back of the house is a modern frame, enclosed porch with one door. The porch measures 8'-2" x 17'-11".

The windows in the main block are larger than those in the wing, 9/6 double-hung sash on the first floor, while the second-floor sash are 6/6 double hung. All the windows have flat-arch lintels. All windows are fitted with modern storm sash. The shutters have been removed, but they are marked by ghosts on the brick walls and by pintels on the window frames.

The main block has a fine molded cornice, while the raised wing has a plain boxed cornice. On the projecting frame addition, the cornice has a partial return across the gable and molded eaves. The wing windows are smaller but still 9/6 in the original portion and 6/6 on the second floor. The brick work clearly shows the raising of the wing to a full two stories in a joint between the main block and the wing enlargement. In the east wall, the enlargement shows plainly in the new brick around the original roof slope and chimney. The roof is standing-seam sheet tin, installed ca. 1980. An old photo, ca. 1895, shows the main block with a sheet-metal roof and the original wing with very deteriorated wood shingles and one shed dormer. Some of the original wood shingles on the main block survived beneath the earlier metal roof, removed by the present owner.

There are three interior brick chimneys: a large one on the west wall of the main block, a smaller one on the east wall of the main block, and a smaller one on the east wing wall. The brick end addition has no evidence of a fireplace or chimney stack.

Interior:

Entry/Stair Hall

The entry hall extends from front to back in the main block. The front and rear doors are six-panel doors with raised panels and appear original. A brass box lock on the front door is modern. Above the front door is a three-light, working transom. The hall has a molded chair rail plus old peg racks for garments that are nailed at door-top height on both sides of the front hall. There are four interior doors: two to the living room on the west side, one to the dining room on the east side, one to the powder room under the stairs. Evidence on west wall of the screened porch indicates that there was originally a fourth door near the front door between the present porch and the entrance hall, but there is no visible evidence of it in the hall. The 3" to 5" board

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heart-pine floor is original. Block-and-pilaster trim is at the doors. Walls and ceilings are plastered. There is a modern ceiling light. The first-floor ceiling is 9'-5-1/2" high.

The stairway is in two flights, with a landing twelve steps up. There is a narrow, curving, molded handrail, a slim, turned newel post, and a half-round rail attached to the wall. A carved wave pattern of scrolled brackets decorates the stair apron. The balusters are rectangular. From the landing a door leads to the raised wing to the east. There is hot-water radiator heat throughout the house.

Living room

West of the entry hall, the present living room was originally two rooms separated by a partition.. (Evidence of the partition exists as marks in the walls, ceilings, and floor boards.) Four 9/6-light double-hung wood windows, two each on the south and north walls, have paneled reveals and five-inch molded trim. On the west wall are two fireplaces, one in each of the original two rooms. Each fireplace is flanked by floor-to-ceiling cabinets with open shelves in the upper portion and doors below. In the unit at the north end, there are notches in the framing indicating that doors have been removed. (These doors have been reused in the bathroom linen closet on the second floor.) The mantel in the south, or front, end of the room is particularly fine, with reeded pilasters, as well as a reeded panel and simple punchwork decoration in the frieze. In the rear room, the fireplace has been filled in. Its mantel has reeded pilasters and a plain, undecorated oval panel in the center of the frieze, possibly inserted. Both fireplaces have brick hearths. The front cabinets left of the fireplace are modern; the rest are original.

A molded chair rail encircles both rooms, and there are wide baseboards. There is no picture rail or ceiling molding. The floor is of wide boards, varying in width up to 11", apparently original. Walls and ceiling are plaster.

Dining Room

The dining room is in the wing, east of the entry hall and two steps down from it. There is one 9/6 window in the front wall and one in the rear wall. A glazed door leads to the screened porch, with glass inserted in four upper panels and two wood panels beneath. There is a molded chair rail, painted plaster wainscot, and wide baseboards. On the west wall, there is a projecting chimney breast and fireplace with molded narrow mantel shelf and a raised double diamond pattern at the ends of the frieze above fluted pilasters. At

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the northeast corner of the room, the wall has been angled, presumably to allow free swing of the rear door in the kitchen. The front door and window are twentieth-century features replacing the original single window. The floor is 2-1/2" boards. The ceiling is 8'3" high.

Kitchen

A modern kitchen is in the original kitchen space. A large cooking fireplace, 5'-10" wide, on the east wall has its original massive wood lintel, and an old mantel shelf with brackets is above it. Exposed brick surrounds the fireplace, and a fieldstone hearth is level with the floor in front of it. The stone was discovered under a modern subfloor and flooring and was reinstalled by the present owners. A large cooking crane, old but not original, is in the fireplace. Wide vertical boards, probably original, form the east wall of the kitchen, and there are modern floorboards, 6" to 8" wide and face-nailed. On the front and rear walls are 9/6 windows. Doors on the front and rear walls open to the screened porch on the front and to the enclosed rear porch. On the east and west walls, paneled doors lead to the dining room and laundry room, respectively. In the northeast corner is an original boxed stair to the second floor. In the northwest corner, an angled wall indicates the former location of a corner cabinet with a pass-through to the dining room.<sup>2</sup>

The one-story utility wing contains a modern laundry and bathroom. At one time it held a pump.

Second Floor, Main Block

A modern bathroom has been installed in a small room at the front of the upstairs hall. A linen closet in the bathroom reuses doors taken from a cabinet in the rear parlor. There are two bedrooms in the main block, both on the west side of the house. The front room, now an office, has a fireplace with flanking closets. The mantelpiece is in two sections, the upper portion a molded mantelshelf that is narrower than the lower shelf. The fireplace is within a plaster arch, added during the Frazer ownership. In the rear bedroom, the fireplace has been closed in, with closets, shelves, and cabinets. Six-over-six wood sash windows are in both rooms. Walls and ceilings are plaster. Floors are the original 4"-6" wide boards, face-nailed.

Second Floor, Wing

A door (not original) east of the main block leads down four steps to three

<sup>2</sup> Helen Houser White, interviewed by Brenda M. Boidock, September 17, 2002.

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bedrooms, two directly above the dining room, extending into the area above the screened porch, and one above the kitchen with a staircase down to the first floor. All the rooms have simple trim. Windows are 6/6-light, double-hung sash. There are modern 2-1/2" wide board floors in the expanded area, and old 6" to 10" boards in the original section. Walls and ceilings are plaster, except in the east room, which has a bead-board ceiling.

Attic

The attic is in one large room with original wide board floors, 7"-13" in width. On the west wall, flues from the four downstairs fireplaces angle together to form a single stack. A small four-light casement window is set between the flues. On the east side are two small four-light casement windows. A single flue from the fireplace on the lower floor angles to the center of the wall and forms a chimney. Roof framing consists of log rafters flattened on the upper sides and squared at the ridge.

The attic over the wing is an unfloored space high enough to stand in upright.

Basement

The basement is under the main block of the house only. It is in two rooms, front and rear. The present stairs and door to the front basement room are from the screened porch. This is a twentieth-century insertion using an old wide-board door on the hatch. On the front wall, near the west end of the main block, there is an outside stair, presently covered over with plywood, which is believed to be the original outside entrance to the basement. The walls are of rubble stone, parged with lime. The ceiling is open, with large log joists flattened on the upper side to receive the first-floor floorboards. The joists range from 6" to 9" in diameter. On the west end, the stone foundation for the upstairs fireplaces curves outward. There are two small windows one each on the west and south sides; the one on the south is closed in. A modern vertical-board partition is between the front and rear rooms. A 9" x 10" girder runs east to-west supporting the north-south joists. The girder is supported by octagonal 8" x 8" posts. In the northeast corner of the rear room, in a location corresponding to the main staircase above, there is evidence of the original basement stairs from the upstairs hall, which were removed to insert a lavatory. The rear basement room is otherwise similar to the front and contains a modern oil-fired furnace for the house's hot-water radiator system. The floor in both rooms is concrete, with the remains of asphalt asbestos tile flooring.

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Under the wing is a crawl space with two small hatchways to the front and rear basement rooms. The joists are rounded, flattened logs running north to south, identical to those under the main block of the house. There is a basement under the one-story addition, which once housed a pump that drew water from the springhouse. This basement has windows on the south and east walls; the south window is now closed. There were originally stairs to the first floor.

Alterations

The house was built originally to include the present principal left side two-story brick block, with a one-story set-back wing to the right. The left block is today's entry hall and double parlor; the right wing contains the present-day dining room and kitchen. Soon after the initial construction, a smaller addition was erected at the extreme right, perhaps a laundry. Today it contains a laundry and bathroom. This composition shows in a surviving late-19<sup>th</sup>-century photograph (ca. 1895).

Later, before 1919, the original right wing was raised from one story to two stories, as may be clearly seen in the newer brickwork of the enlargement. To the front, a projecting frame second-floor addition to the immediate right of the main block is over the front porch; it was probably built at the same time that the rest of the wing was raised.

There is a Victorian porch on the main block, and a one-story porch across the right wing, perhaps the old porch that is visible in the photograph mentioned above. The Victorian front porch shows in the old photograph with scrolled decoration and a dentil cornice. Today the porch retains the old posts and cornice, but the scroll work has been removed and a new floor installed. On the rear of the kitchen is a modern, enclosed, frame porch, replacing an old open one.

Although no documentary evidence for the construction date has been found, both the architecture and the inheritance history of the property suggest a date between 1813 and 1820. The 1820 tax rate was dramatically raised, to 10 times higher than in previous years, but this was part of a state-wide reassessment and not necessarily an indication of added value to land or buildings. Otherwise the assessment remained the same from 1804 until 1820 and the higher assessment continued after 1820, providing no evidence suggesting the construction of the house. Tax records for other nearby properties were examined and were found to have increased at the same rate. Architecturally, the general form, roof, brickwork, including Flemish bond on the front, and interior doors, trim, stairs, and fireplaces suggest a date within the range

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suggested above.

The Quaker settlements of Loudoun County—Waterford, Hamilton, and Lincoln,—present several examples of two-story, side-hall houses with a lower, recessed one-story service wing of dining room and kitchen. In this instance, the two portions were built at the same time. The straight rear brick wall was built at the same time with no tell-tale signs of a different construction period except for the raising of the wing to two stories, which is clearly indicated by a joint line in the brick work. On the front, the wing is recessed from the main block, and the brickwork is toothed together at the joints in a manner that would have been difficult to achieve in later construction. The framing of the house is not accessible in the second floor, but the first floor can be seen in the basement under the main block and the crawl space under the wing. The framing is identical, of logs flattened on the top or floor side. This type of framing is common in Loudoun County houses of this period.

Nearby examples of this plan type in Lincoln and Waterford include Janney's Mill (VA 53-166), ca. 1813, in Lincoln, with a plan of main block and recessed one-story wing, with porch on the wing matching that of the William Smith House, and Cool Spring (VA 53-161), early 1800s, also in Lincoln, with a matching plan but with the wing built in the early 1800s and the main block erected ca. 1827.

Other examples of this type in the area are VA 53-177, J. Hatcher House, with a recessed and lower two-story wing, and Narrow Gate (VA53-529), early 1800s, with a later wing, Locust Hall (Liberty Hall), VA 53-124. There are also several similar houses in Lincoln and several in Waterford, although in Waterford the wing is usually on the rear rather than on the side—e.g., Hollingsworth-Lee House (VA 401-4) and Samuel Hough House (VA 401-23). "Old Acre" (VA 401-43) has the wing at the side.

Thus it is clear that the William Smith House type, and many of its interior details such as cabinets flanking the fireplace in the two parlors, were in common use in the Quaker settlements during the early nineteenth century.

The first addition was the small, one-story brick room at the right of the kitchen. It is 10'4" x 14'2" and is in line with the kitchen at the front but is not as deep. The roof is a lower gable. The brickwork is in character with that of the main house—before five-course American bond gave way to seven-course bond. The room's function is not clear, but a water pump was included in it. The rear enclosed porch is frame, with a shed roof, and was built in the later twentieth century.

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On the interior, the first floor of the main block originally had front and rear parlors, each with a fireplace and flanking built-in cabinets, on the right side only in the front room and on both sides of the rear room. The front room left-side cabinet is modern, post 1980, and matches the others. The cabinets are comprised of a lower section with doors that survive in place and upper section where the doors have been removed. (These are reused in the second floor bathroom.) Such a fireplace-cabinet arrangement with two parlors and a side hall is common in the area, (see the above discussion of comparable houses). The partition between the parlors was removed in the 1940s by a previous owner. Ghosts of the former partition are visible in the wall and ceiling.

The kitchen has doors front and back, both original. The dining room has an original window on the rear wall. A combination of a door and window inserted on the front wall are modern, probably twentieth-century, and evidence of their insertion may be seen in the ragged edges of the brickwork surrounding the insertion. Presumably this was originally a window, (or a door) complementing the rear window. At some time the present basement stairs, opening on the screened porch in front of the dining room, were added causing the original side exit door from the main block hall to be closed in and filled on the porch side with shelves. The original outside basement doors, opening to the front to the left of the main block porch have been closed in, replaced, presumably by the new stairs to the porch. The original interior stairs to the basement, under the main stairs, were closed in after 1978 and converted to a powder room. In the rear basement room, the framing shows the placement of the original stairs.

On the second story of the main block, the hall has been cut off at the front to create a bathroom. This was done after 1941, as when Dr. William Frazer purchased the property in that year it had no electricity, central heat or bathroom, but only a hand pump in the present laundry room. The front bedroom has a 1940s addition of cabinets flanking the fireplace, joined by an arch over the fireplace. The mantelpiece is either modern (ca. 1946) or, more likely, is an old one that has been enhanced. The rear bedroom fireplace has been closed in. Closets and cabinets have been added.

Outbuildings

There are six outbuildings on the property, of which three are contributing buildings, two are contributing structures, and one is a noncontributing

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===== structure. These include: a large, brick barn (ca. 1813); an adjoining cattle shelter, or "loafing shed" (ca. 1900); a brick springhouse (ca. 1813); a frame corncrib (ca. 1900?); a cement-block garage (ca. 1948); and a modern horse stable.

Barn

The notable brick barn, with its distinctive pattern of ventilation holes is one of only six of its kind surviving in the county today. Following a storm, part of the upper wall and roof were removed. It was re-roofed in 1965, according to painted name and date on the bottom of the trusses. The forebay, in badly deteriorated condition, was removed after 1990. According to the previous owners (the Frazers), the barn had an 1813 date stone, which was in existence during their tenure but which is now lost.

The large, gable-roofed, two-and-a-half-story brick bank barn, 35' x 51', with decorative openwork diamond patterns on the front and gable ends is located southwest of the house, beyond the entrance drive. The barn is built into the southeast slope of a small hill. The brick walls of the main block are laid in five-to eleven-course American bond, 12" thick up to the loft and then 9" thick. The foundation and first floor are of rubble stone. The gable roof is of standing-seam metal. Ventilator holes are arranged in repetitive diamond shaped patterns in the brick gable ends and northwest wall. The east end shows eight diamonds, but there were originally several more that were lost when the roof was replaced and the upper walls were rebuilt in the 1960s following storm damage to the building. The S-shaped ends of iron reinforcing rods are visible on the east gable end. Also on the east end and south side are louvered windows with flared brick lintels and wood sills.

The main entrance to the barn is on the long north wall, through sliding vertical-board doors with a panel of vertical boards above. The door is modern and opens to the center aisle of the barn at the main, second-story level. There is one door and one window at the east end, with louvers. There are two doorways on the south wall and none on the west. On the east side of the center aisle are six animal stalls. A ladder to the hayloft and stairs to the first floor are on the west. The area above the center aisle is open from the second level to the roof. Visible on the underside of the trusses is the painted inscription: "G. E. Rollison 13 trusses [illegible] trusses part of 25 33'6" span 6/12 MSO 78148 DEL 6-5-65."<sup>3</sup> The first floor of the

<sup>3</sup> This refers to the rebuilding of the upper walls and roof of the barn. The storm that damaged the barn apparently occurred in the 1950s and it seems likely

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barn has stone walls with a louvered window and door on the east, three doors and two windows, louvered, on the south wall, and one door on the west. On the south side there is one wide, open doorway at the loft level.

The south side originally had a projecting forebay in frame. Only the stone stub walls of the first floor remain. The forebay was removed ca. 1992 in very deteriorated condition. The interior barn framing is massive, with 10"x 12" and 12" x 15" girders, and 6" x 6", 8" x 8", and octagonal 10" x 10" posts. Floorboards are 1-1/2" x 10"-12".

Springhouse

Adjacent to the large pond, the 10'-9" x 16'-1", two-story brick springhouse, ca. 1813-20, a particularly fine example of its type. The first floor is set below grade and is in two rooms. The entrance is at the left side in the open arch entry with four steps down to the floor level. A well is on the far side of the entry space. To the right a doorway leads through a board partition to the "cool room" with a masonry water trough along the rear and right sides, used for cooling spoilable foods, especially milk. The trough is spread by the spring and exits into the pond. In the cool room there are small window openings without sash on the exterior walls. The walls are 14" thick, and the brick is laid in mostly six-course American bond above a stone rubble foundation. The floor is stone and cement. The interior walls are parged. The upper floor is rough and unfinished and is accessed from a vertical-board door on the left side. The stairs, probably wood, are missing. There is a small window opening on the gable end opposite the door. The roof structure is modern, and the roofing is standing-seam sheet metal.

Loafing Shed

The stone-and-frame seven-bay shed adjoins the west end of the barn and extends westward. It is open on the south side and is set partially into the rising grade at the rear. The end wall is stone rubble, as is the rear. The gable is wood frame, and there is a standing-seam sheet metal roof. There is one door at the center rear. It was re-roofed and repaired ca. 1990.

Stable

A modern cement-block four-bay stable has a wood-framed gable roof covered in standing seam sheet metal. The left bay has a wide, doorless opening for equipment storage. The other three bays are windowless, with vertical-board doors. On the right side are two small windows and on the left side, there is

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one.  The stable is now used for storage.
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Corncrib

The corncrib was built in two stages, the first in the nineteenth century, the second probably in the early twentieth century. It is an unusually large structure, with a double-wide center aisle for wagons. There is attic storage in addition to the normal side storage compartments. The attic is reached by a ladder. The structure is wood, sheathed in slotted vertical boards. There is a standing-seam sheet metal gable roof. The foundation is stone piers. The interior aisle has vertical-board partitions, doors, and hatches to the side storage areas. The attic gable ends have hatch openings of vertical boards; the west hatch is now missing. At the peak of the gable, in the center of the building, is a square ventilator. The structure is now used for vehicle and equipment storage. To the west of the crib was a storage shed, demolished after 1990.

Garage

The one-and-a-half-story two-car garage is built of cement blocks. It has a front gable roof of wood, with a standing-seam sheet-metal covering. There is a storage area above the car area and a 6/6 light double hung window. The building was erected ca. 1948. It is partially built into the rising grade, and there is a rear door. There are no first-floor windows, but there are sliding, up-and-over garage doors. The floor is of concrete. It was built on the site of the former ice house (removed pre-1941). It is currently used as a garage.